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NATIONAL DOMESTIC INDUSTRY.

By JACOB FALKE.

We have frequently endeavored to open up the unknown or misunderstood sources of modern Art-Industry, whether they were to be traced back to past times, or to far distant countries, from which we might gather any ideas that would contribute towards a satisfaction of the demand for novelty and perfection by suggesting new typical forms and ornamental motives. We now propose to ourselves a similar object in treating of an art, or rather a branch of industry, which has at least been much neglected or left disregarded, and which we desire to class under the comprehensive title of national domestic industry. We will presently explain what we include under this name.

We would however premise that there is an especial reason for calling attention to this branch of industry at this particular time. Another universal Exhibition is to be held in Vienna in 1873, and it is one which, according to the projected plans, will be second to none of its predecessors in magnificence and variety. One entire compartment is to be exclusively devoted to the most comprehensive exposition of the objects which we designate as national domestic industry. To ensure its success, as it must include a great number of different countries, these must all through their own commissioners enter into the most cordial cooperation. It will therefore be of great utility to direct attention to these objects thus early, and as widely as possible, and the more so inasmuch as it is just where the exhibition is to take place, that the productions of national domestic industry are in a great measure unknown, or considered unworthy of any great interest; besides which, this particular branch of the exhibition should be looked upon in several points of view which we think require some elucidation.

Under the expression national domestic industry then we comprehend all articles which, whether created by the people themselves or emanating from the people are produced for their own use. They have a close connexion with national costumes and in a great measure include them. They will embrace all the peculiarities in the forms of vessels and ornaments, which have remained from olden times — we do not for the moment moot the question of the date of their origin — characteristic of certain tribes, provinces, districts and villages, and which serve, or might serve equally with the national costume, as signs of demarcation. We use therefore the term national only in the sense of the popular or typical, and so do not place the modern civilised states one against the other, as for example, the industry of France and England, though even these in their newest and most fashionable forms have distinct peculiarities. What we intend by the term we have adopted is the exact opposite of fashion, it is the permanent instead of the changeable, the peculiarities of the lower classes, especially of the country people, and more particularly of those regions in which modern civilisation and its attendant fashion have not yet penetrated.

We apply to it moreover the name of domestic industry and will point out thereby another particular feature in which this is distinct from the industry of civilisation. The latter is produced in factories or by trades, and soon passes into the category of the wholesale: National industry is domiciled at certain places and carried on at home. Its productions are finished in the very spot where they are worn or used, and for the most part by the people themselves who wear or use them. This is the case in the Swedish province of Dalecarlia,

where every peasant finishes with his own hands every thing he needs for himself or his family, so that it may be said that there are as many shoemakers, tailors, smiths, etc., in a district, as there are inhabitants. Elsewhere, as in Slavonia, every village has its silversmith who manufactures the ornaments for the beauties of the place, while these weave and embroider their clothes.

There is also a certain house-industry, especially in mountainous districts, peculiar to certain localities, as for example, the clockmaking trade in the Black-forest, the wood carving of Berchtesgaden, the toy trade of many places, and several others which might be enumerated. These we exclude, as not national though peculiar; they are certainly manufactured *in* the house, though not *for* the house, but for the market, for the world at large. They are articles of commerce, their manufacture is, as it were, only transferred to the village, disseminated in the several houses and generally made to the order of large dealers. These differ in principle from that kind of industry which we have in view.

On the other hand, it may be that the objects of which we are speaking have all the characteristics of national industry, old original forms, old and peculiar technical treatment, and of exclusively popular use in contrast to fashion; not however made in the village home, but by trades in the towns, where they are to be found in the shops for the country people or whoever else may wear or use them. Such is the case, for example, with the very peculiar ornaments of the Dutch women, which may be seen in Utrecht and other towns in numerous goldsmiths' shops, whereas in the Swedish towns no production of national domestic industry is ever exposed for sale in their shops; whoever desires to find them must go to the villages in country places and even into the very houses where they are made, or purchase them from those who wear them on their persons, if he happens to meet any. Such objects as these Dutch ornaments, even when produced by trades we will include in national domestic industry on account of their intrinsic artistic connexion.

For we would at once premise that it is the artistic and indeed, what may at first appear remarkable, the modern artistic point of view from which we have to treat of these objects, and in which their special exposition in the Vienna Exhibition of 1873 should be made. We will proceed at once to explain our meaning.

The interest which attaches itself to these objects is certainly of different kinds. In the Paris exhibition of 1867, where it may be said they excited for the first time the general attention of the artists and antiquarians, it was especially the ethnographical point of view that was at once the cause of their consignment and the motive of their exposition. Those who had called for them as well as those who sent them had no idea that the chief interest which they would excite would be a purely artistic one, or that they would ever become of any importance for modern Art-Industry. Everything therefore that appertained to clothing and ornament was exhibited as costume, as the dress and ornament of

life-sized figures, which had some pretension to national physiology and fidelity of representation. With regard to the rest of the objects, it was at once seen that they were selected more on account of their peculiarity and singularity than for their general beauty, while whole branches of industry, such as household furniture for example, were entirely unrepresented, though in many countries possessing great peculiarities of form and ornamentation.

In spite of this, we will not say inverted, but certainly onesided point of view in the selection, it was most especially through their artistic qualities that these objects attracted the attention they enjoyed, and that the lovers of art of all countries, foreseeing the peculiar branches of industry to which they would give rise, recognised in several ways their value and importance.

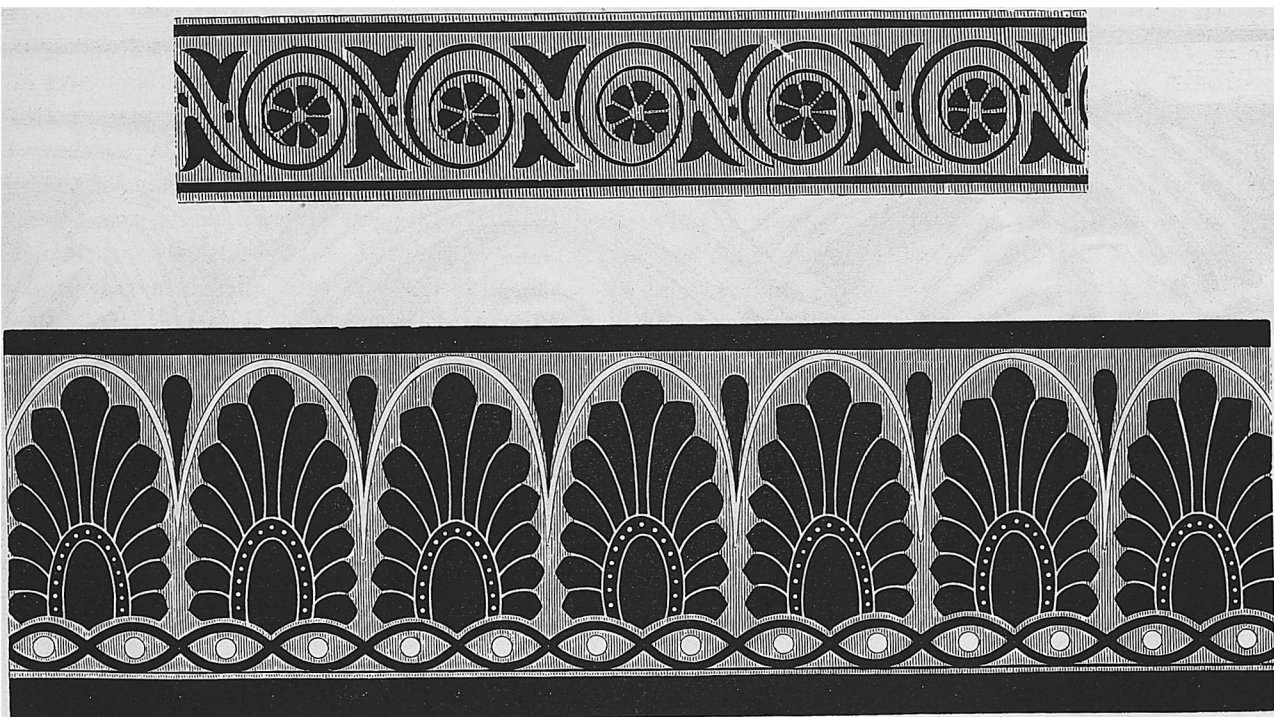
Their importance was at once acknowledged from a historical point of view. In vessels which in their exterior frequently bore the marks of a rude fabrication, which emanated from uneducated tribes, and were produced in villages for the use of the households of peasants; in such vessels were found forms recalling the noble contours of a plastic art period, from which they most clearly must have derived their origin. They have been retained in common use among people whom fashion never even approached, while the civilisation and style to which they owe their origin have disappeared for two thousand years. This is the case, for example, with the earthenware vessels of the countries on the lower Danube, formerly Roman provinces enjoying the Græco-roman civilisation, but which after the decline of the empire again relapsed into the darkness of barbarism. These vessels are still partly covered by a black coating which, though not an enamel, bears a certain resemblance to the peculiar black varnish of the Grecian earthenware, the secret of which is still unknown to us. Other vessels of the same material, which are found in use among the peasants of several districts in Italy continue, roughly indeed but still with unmistakeable traces of their origin, the once so celebrated majolica manufactures of the Renaissance period, which partly on account of the decline of the Art, but chiefly on account of the preference for the oriental porcelain and white enamel, fell into decay towards the end of the sixteenth century, and which in the course of the seventeenth, notwithstanding some by no means unsuccessful attempts at renewal, entirely ceased. They survive indeed, in a peasant majolica, in these Italian vessels, just as in the peasant costumes of the present day survive some ancient fashions of the *beau monde*, transformed however into stiff caricature. So also in Portugal and Spain, and still more in those countries to the south and east of the Mediterranean, which have remained mahometan, there are found earthenware vessels of different kinds, which, however rude in shape, are still remains of the brilliant period of Saracenic civilisation in mediæval times, and which are not only exceedingly interesting on account of their historical reminiscences, but surprising by the peculiarity and variety of their forms, and the beauty and originality of their ornamentation.

But it is not only in pottery and its forms that the Art element is so apparent. Let us take another species of national industry, namely jewellery, and we shall have occasion to remark that the entire group of personal ornament for the people which belongs to this branch possesses among other particulars a *technique* and style of decoration peculiar to itself and which had become a mere matter of history instead of a living art. For it was entirely lost to the goldsmith in civilised Europe, until a few years ago when it was again revived. We mean filigree work, which in olden times was the most delicate and most charming peculiarity of antique ornament, and was wrought to such a perfection as now astonishes the eyes of the connoisseur and excites his highest admiration. In mediæval times both in ecclesiastical and secular art, the filigree was less delicately treated, but wrought with greater predilection and to greater degree of beauty. Even the goldsmiths of the Renaissance practised it, though with little frequency of application, and Benvenuto Cellini speaks in his treatise about the method of its perfection. And what is now the case? As we have already said, until a few years ago, it was almost unknown to the goldsmith's trade, while it was familiar to the National Art-Industry of all countries. We find it, not only as we find the Grecianised vessels,

in places where Grecian civilisation once flourished; we find it in the north in the high latitudes of Scandinavia, in the islands of Denmark and Friesland, and in Holland; we find it also in Italy, where, as in Genoa, its use among the peasants has kept up a lively manufacture, which, from time to time has introduced piece after piece, though in a modernised form, into the modern world; we find it also in the countries of the lower Danube in the mountainous districts of Greece and Turkey, in Asia Minor, up the Nile as far as Soudan, not to mention those countries so highly celebrated for their Art-Industry, India, China and Japan. And we are not to imagine that the filigree works of all these countries are of a rude character. They do not certainly come up to the Grecian delicacy of treatment, but still they are wrought to such perfection that in Rome when Castellani was anxious to revive the filigree for the modern goldsmith's art, and doubted whether he would ever be able to rival the Grecian delicacy and freedom, he went to the remotest mountainous districts to find workmen for the peasant jewellery. And these very workmen became the teachers of his atelier which is now unquestionably the first in the world.

(To be continued in our next.)

SPECIMENS OF ORNAMENTATION.



Nos. 1 and 2. Grecian. — Vase Ornaments.